

Effect of message orientation/vividness on consumer engagement for travel brands on social networking sites

Anish Yousaf

Department of Marketing and Strategy, ICFAI Business School, IFHE University, Hyderabad, India

Insha Amin

Center for Hospitality and Tourism, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Jammu, India

Dhouha Jaziri

Department of Marketing, Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion de Sousse, Université de Sousse, Sousse, Tunisia, and

Abhishek Mishra

Department of Marketing, Indian Institute of Management, Indore, India

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to examine how consumer-brand engagement on social networking sites (SNS) is an outcome of the message orientation/vividness.

Design/methodology/approach – Message design is proposed to include two components, namely, orientation and vividness. The message orientation is classified as either task/instrumental or socioemotional. The message vividness is measured through content type. The consumer-brand engagement is conceptualized at three levels, namely, cognitive (comment), affective (shares) and conative (likes). A total of 1,000 posts were collected from the official Facebook pages of the 10 most popular travel brands, five each from India and the USA. These two countries were chosen as they are culturally different, with the former representing a largely collectivist culture and greater social connectivity and the latter representing primarily an individualistic culture.

Findings – The study reveals that greater message vividness, with more interactive/audio-visual content, leads to higher engagement. The task/instrumental message orientation leads to low-/medium-level engagement. Overall, a combination of high-vividness and socioemotional orientation generates maximum engagement. India and the USA depict unique effects of message orientations/vividness on the consumer-brand engagement levels, indicating cultural implications for the brand SNS messages – effectiveness.

Research limitations/implications – The study's conceptualization of consumer-brand engagement reflected through the consumers – responses to brands – SNS messages, represents new knowledge. The unique effects of message vividness and orientation on consumer-brand engagement and the variations across cultures is also a novel contribution to the extant branding literature.

Practical implications – The brand marketers should not only design their SNS messages with appropriate vividness/orientation but also tweak them across cultures, for maximum consumer engagement.

Originality/value – The study is a novel attempt to deploy the interaction process analysis framework in an SNS setting.

Keywords Brand engagement, Brand communication, Social media, Digital marketing, Cross-cultural research

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Social networking sites (SNS) have created a paradigm shift for brand communications, with many firms using the mass advertising/communication platforms (Lee and Hsieh, 2019; Lim *et al.*, 2020; Luo *et al.*, 2019; Moran *et al.*, 2019). Since 2016, there has been a 47% increase in the consumers' interest in using SNS to follow/engage-with brands (Kavanagh, 2019). Leveraging SNS gives brands the capability to support marketing activities through disseminating information,

product/brand promotion and customer service. The brand-hosted content on SNS enables a two-way conversation with consumers, creating an enhanced consumer-brand engagement (Moran *et al.*, 2019; Simon and Tossan, 2018).

The importance of SNS as marketing springboards is equally applicable for tourism brands, as consumers use them to procure pre-travel information (Buhalis, 2020; Harrigan *et al.*, 2017; Leung *et al.*, 2013, 2019; Luo *et al.*, 2019). Hence, tourism brands make substantial SNS investments to connect

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available on Emerald Insight at: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/1061-0421.htm>



Journal of Product & Brand Management
© Emerald Publishing Limited [ISSN 1061-0421]
[DOI 10.1108/JPBM-08-2019-2546]

The authors are thankful to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable inputs.

Received 30 August 2019
Revised 4 January 2020
28 March 2020
4 April 2020
11 April 2020
Accepted 15 April 2020

globally (Buhalis, 2020; Thomaz *et al.*, 2017). The travel firms in the USA alone increased their e-advertising spending, including that on SNS, by 21.4% to \$10.86bn in 2019, which is estimated to grow by 19.1% in 2020 (Benes, 2019; Gonzalo, 2019). With the emergence of new culture-based travel segments, travel brands need to connect effectively with the end-consumers with specific cultural backgrounds (Hays *et al.*, 2013; Mariani and Predvoditeleva, 2019).

Despite the ever-increasing importance of digital platforms for marketing purposes because of their multiple capabilities, the extant research on how brand messages on such platforms can enhance consumer-brand engagement is limited (Buhalis and Foerste, 2015; Leonidou *et al.*, 2018). There is, also, an unclear understanding of the consumer-brand engagement concept in the SNS domain, as well as of the explicit role of message characteristics and culture on such engagement (Ferreira *et al.*, 2020; Khan *et al.*, 2016; Voorveld *et al.*, 2018). Most extant studies in the SNS domain consider consumer response as the collective outcome of various dimensions of consumer-brand engagement and not a manifestation of each level (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016; Kumar *et al.*, 2018). Thus, there is a research gap mandating a clearer conceptualization of consumer-brand engagement on SNS, the impact of message design attributes on engagement and the variations in these relationships across cultures (Hays *et al.*, 2013; Lu, 2018; Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Moran *et al.*, 2019).

The research questions that the current work addresses are as follows:

- RQ1.* What are the behavioral manifestations of consumer-brand engagement on digital platforms such as SNS?
- RQ2.* How should the brands design messages to maximize such engagement?
- RQ3.* How do the aforementioned effects of message design on engagement change with culture?

This study analyzes 1,000 SNS messages from the 10 popular travel brands across India and the USA. The user such as, shares and comments on each message reflect the three engagement dimensions, conative, affective and cognitive, respectively. The two message design attributes considered are vividness and orientation/sub-orientations. While vividness is contingent on the type of content posted (video/image/text/link), orientation is classified into task/instrumental and socioemotional, based on the interaction process analysis (IPA) framework (Bales, 1950).

The remaining paper is arranged as follows. Section 2 comprises the literature review, followed by the model constructs in Section 3 and the hypotheses in Section 4. The methodology in Section 5, results and analysis are detailed in Section 6. The paper mentions a general discussion in Section 7. Section 8 presents the theoretical implications and Section 9 explains managerial implications. The contributions and limitations/future directions are defined in Section 10. Finally, Section 11 concludes the paper.

2. Literature review

2.1 Marketing and branding through digital platforms

Like Industry 4.0, digital transformations have caused the evolution of new business/revenue models globally, leveraged

through digital technologies and platforms (Geissbauer *et al.*, 2016). Marketers can use such platforms to overcome the geographical boundaries hindering access to market knowledge, opportunities and customers (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2019). Through big-data analytics, digital platforms provide marketers with information about consumer preferences, purchase processes, openness to offerings and response to promotions (Buhalis and Foerste, 2015). Digital platforms can also fulfill different roles/functions such as marketplaces, intermediaries and innovation facilitators, thus serving as an important component to a firm's marketing mix (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2019; Mariani and Borghi, 2019).

Digital platforms are effective mechanisms to fulfill a firm's branding objectives. They can support digital innovation, customer-centricity, value propositions and resultant immersive consumer experiences (Jain and Schultz, 2019). Besides facilitating direct consumer-brand interactions, digital platforms can validate a brand's product/service quality/performance through co-customer consultations (Essamri *et al.*, 2019). From a digital consumer-brand engagement perspective, based on product/service ownership, digital platforms perform four unique roles for consumers as follows:

- 1 stimulation of thinking, learning and knowledge-acquisition;
- 2 enhancement of self-perceived fit to referent groups;
- 3 provision of visibility through social comparison; and
- 4 enhancement of extended-self (Scheinbaum, 2016).

Thus, digital platforms help brands manage and leverage customer relationships effectively and offer customized products/services (Buhalis and Foerste, 2015).

With the advancements of information technology, digital platforms such as SNS, have evolved as cost-effective enablers for brands operating across national boundaries (Buhalis and Foerste, 2015; Katsikeas *et al.*, 2019). However, cultural differences may modulate the capability of digital platforms, which can enhance or limit the effectiveness of a brand's digital marketing initiatives (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2019). For example, in socially-connected collectivistic cultures, there are significant cross-consumer interactions about brands' products/services (Jiao *et al.*, 2018). Such greater cross-consumer interactions tend to propagate the electronic word-of-mouth about consumer-brand interactions, especially those which are negative (Mahapatra and Mishra, 2017). Hence, the brands deploying digital platforms should carefully consider such factors that may limit or enable the efficacy of their online marketing efforts.

2.2 Consumer-brand engagement on social networking sites

Consumer-brand engagement is "the specific interactive experiences between the consumers, the brand and other community members" (Brodie *et al.*, 2013, p. 107). It includes the behaviors beyond purchasing and encapsulates post-purchase outcomes (feedback and word-of-mouth), which are cognitive, emotional and conative responses to the consumer-brand interactions (Gong, 2018; Harrigan *et al.*, 2017; Kumar *et al.*, 2018; Lu, 2018). This multi-dimensional psychological concept of engagement is rarely adopted by extant studies in the SNS domain (Hays *et al.*, 2013; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016;

Kumar *et al.*, 2018). Most studies consider consumer response to SNS brand messages as the collective outcomes of engagement and not as reflections of the various dimensions/levels of engagement.

SNS enables consumer-brand engagement through the exchange of brand- and consumer-generated content, either through communities or advertisements (Baghirov *et al.*, 2019; Buhalis, 2020; Liao *et al.*, 2020; Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Thomaz *et al.*, 2017). SNS advertisements are targeted toward consumers with specific profiles. However, such consumers generally ignore them due to self-induced blindness, leading to only 0.11% clicks registered for all advertisement impressions (Oberoi, 2019)[1].

SNS brand communities are consumer groups with well-developed social identities and common interests. In such communities, people develop relationships with the brands, their products/services and the co-consumers through shared experiences in a healthy interactive space (Agrawal *et al.*, 2018; Dessart *et al.*, 2015; Ferreira *et al.*, 2020; Khan *et al.*, 2016; Ozboliik and Dursun, 2017). However, the shared excitement about a brand may not be enough to drive continual engagement. For that, brands need to constantly motivate consumers through engaging messages (Baghirov *et al.*, 2019; Liao *et al.*, 2020; Pongpaew *et al.*, 2017). The message attributes that encourage active engagement have received less focus in the branding literature (Voorveld *et al.*, 2018).

2.3 Tourism marketing with social networking sites

The important role of SNS as an intermediary platform between the tourism brands and consumers, to form a triadic relationship, is well-known (Leung *et al.*, 2019). In the domain of SNS-based destination marketing, prior exploratory studies include e-destination marketing strategies from a stakeholder perspective (Mistilis *et al.*, 2014), online information quality for destinations (Inversini and Buhalis, 2009) and effective SNS usage by destination marketing organizations (Hays *et al.*, 2013). However, there exist few empirical works that consider the importance of SNS as a marketing platform for tourism brands.

Extant works in the tourism marketing domain support the notion that consumer-brand conversations on SNS have a significant effect on the consumer's subsequent behaviors such as information search, experience sharing and value co-creation with the brands (Ge and Gretzel, 2018). Such conversations enable brands to engage with diverse customers, leading to enhanced reach, consumer insights and market performance/share (Chathoth *et al.*, 2016). The limited recent research, focusing on SNS marketing effectiveness for tourism brands, also indicates the importance of online consumer-brand conversations for positive online/offline consumer outcomes (Buhalis and Foerste, 2015; Harrigan *et al.*, 2017; Ferreira *et al.*, 2020; Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Parihar and Dawra, 2020).

SNS platforms are gradually integrating the next-generation technologies such as blockchain, recommendation algorithms, deep learning, augmented/virtual reality and artificial intelligence, to revolutionize the tourism pre-travel and during-travel experiences (Stylos, 2019; Williams *et al.*, 2019). Hence, more empirical work is needed to understand the role of efficacious SNS message design in enhancing the consumer-brand relationship. The tourism sector also benefits the most

from globalization, with tourism/hospitality brands constantly interacting with consumers of varied cultures through digital platforms (Buhalis, 2020). Prior studies, including those mentioned above, are largely focused on a specific country/region, with little cross-country/-region empirical investigation. Thus, an examination of the SNS message design and its impact on engagement across cultures is highly relevant (Mariani *et al.*, 2019c). Few works investigate this theme (Gao *et al.*, 2018; Liu *et al.*, 2017; Mariani *et al.*, 2019c), a gap attempted to be addressed by the current work.

3. Model constructs

3.1 Social networking sites consumer-brand engagement

Based on the arguments by Dessart *et al.* (2015) and Gong (2018), this work conceptualizes engagement as a three-dimensional construct reflected through specific online consumer actions. Prior works (Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Leung *et al.*, 2019) suggest that the SNS consumer engagement can be classified as high (comments), medium (shares) and low (likes). Each of these is proposed to reflect the cognitive, affective and conative dimensions of consumer-brand engagement, respectively. Commenting on the SNS brand messages indicates the highest-level engagement, as it involves cognitive investment in that message. However, sharing and liking are simpler tasks requiring just a mouse click and thereby reflect the affective and conative engagements, respectively.

3.2 Message orientation and vividness

Two aspects of brand messages are key – orientation and vividness – with the former representing tonality (action/goal-oriented) and the latter audio-visual richness (Mariani *et al.*, 2019a). To identify message orientations, the IPA framework, which has been widely used to analyze the interaction structure across small groups, is deployed (Bales, 1950; Savolainen, 2011). The IPA framework is useful for understanding the “systems of human interaction” for small groups and partial or even microscopic, components of larger social systems (Bales, 1950, p. 257).

While the framework examines how small groups interact for a specific task, it can also be used to analyze general interactions around an emergent task provided by a brand such as seeking information (Nelmarkka *et al.*, 2015). The findings for such small groups can be extended to larger systems. The IPA coding categorizes a message into two orientations, namely, task/instrumental and socioemotional, which are further sub-classified. Socioemotional orientation implies that the messages contain more emotional content that suppresses anxiety/tension (Bales, 1950). Task/instrumental orientation means that the messages provide/solicit suggestions, opinions or information (Bales, 1950).

Besides orientation, vividness is an important message component (Lee and Hsieh, 2019; Mariani *et al.*, 2018). From an elaboration-likelihood model (ELM) perspective, consumers process messages through two routes as follows: the central, where consumers focus on the functional message content; and the peripheral, which contains cues such as message detailing, aesthetics and other specifics, apart from the primary communication. The current study operationalizes

vividness with the primary message text activating the central route and additional details – images, GIFs, videos and links – activating the peripheral route. Recently, the ELM has been applied to SNS communication research, which validates the respective importance of the two cues in creating consumer interest (Cyr *et al.*, 2018).

4. Hypotheses

Extant research is divided on the facilitating vs inhibiting effect of message vividness on engagement (Keller and Lehmann, 2008). A possible reason for this inconsistency pertains to the differences in the operationalization of vividness (Ophir *et al.*, 2019). Nisbett and Ross (1980) argue that vivid messages, with greater audio-visual components and interactivity, generate immersive consumer experiences (Lee and Hsieh, 2019; MacKenzie, 1986; Mariani *et al.*, 2018). From the ELM perspective, it can be argued that the messages that evoke both the central route (through impactful message content) and the peripheral route (by embedding interactive images, videos or links) should lead to higher/cognitive engagement (comments), compared to the messages that have either of the two (Agrawal *et al.*, 2018; Mariani *et al.*, 2018). Thus:

H1a. Lower vividness positively influences the number of likes/shares received for a message.

H1b. Higher vividness positively influences the number of comments received for a message.

The effect of message orientation on consumer response is subject to limited investigation (Pederson, 2016). In the sales context, Keeling *et al.* (2010) indicate that a socioemotional message style, compared to task/instrumental, enhances consumer trust. Similar studies have reflected the relative positive outcomes of socioemotional message orientations in enhancing engagement (Darian *et al.*, 2005; Pederson, 2016). Thus, SNS messages with a socioemotional orientation should evoke greater consumer-brand engagement. This also implies that the task/instrumental orientation creates lower/conative or medium/affective engagement (likes/shares), while the socioemotional orientation generates higher/cognitive engagement (comments) (Nelmarkka *et al.*, 2015). Thus:

H2a. Task/instrumental orientation positively influences the number of likes/shares received for a message.

H2b. Socioemotional orientation positively influences the number of comments received for a message.

In the online domain, extant research leveraging ELM suggests that the mechanical message features such as interactivity, navigation and connectedness; and the aesthetic features, including background, image or video and format, lead to higher engagement. This effect is enhanced if the message has a social or emotional theme (Cyr *et al.*, 2018; Pederson, 2016; Xu and Sundar, 2016). Thus, a positive interaction occurs between the message's orientation and vividness and its engaging abilities, with a socioemotional content with high-vividness creating the highest/cognitive engagement. Thus,

H3. Messages combining socioemotional orientation and higher vividness cause a higher number of comments, compared to messages with other combinations.

Many works indicate a difference in the impact of message orientation, across cultures, on the effectiveness of brand campaigns (Gao *et al.*, 2018; Mariani and Predvoditeleva, 2019). Tsai and Men (2017) examine how engagement levels on brand SNS pages are influenced by the culture's collectivism/individualism. They indicate that the collectivist cultures prefer socioemotional messages, over those with task/instrumental orientation. Kumar *et al.* (2018) suggest that the culture may impact a brand's SNS messaging strategy, with implications for orientation. Gong (2018) also establish the moderating role of the consumers' culture-derived value-orientations, which drive their responses to SNS messages with specific orientations. As various cultural elements (individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, high/low power distance, high/low uncertainty avoidance, long-/short-term orientation and indulgence/withdrawal) may affect the consumer responses to SNS messages differently across orientations, it is proposed that as follows:

H4a. The effect of messages with task/instrumental orientation on likes/shares will vary across cultures.

H4b. The effect of messages with socioemotional orientation on comments will vary across cultures.

There is evidence that the message vividness also affects consumer responses differently across cultures. Khan *et al.* (2016) examine the impact of cultural variations on the performance of specific messages with varying vividness (richness/diversity) and interactivity (content/form). Lu (2018) posit that consumers of different nationalities engage differently with the brands' messages comprising various levels of detail. Mariani *et al.* (2018) and Mariani and Predvoditeleva (2019) explore how users review the SNS messages differently, based on cultural aspects such as individualism, masculinity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation and indulgence. Thus:

H4c. The effect of messages with lower vividness on likes/shares will vary across cultures.

H4d. The effect of messages with higher vividness on comments will vary across cultures.

5. Methodology

5.1 Variable coding

The current study referred to official pages of the 10 most followed travel brands in the USA and India on Facebook. Facebook was chosen as it has over two billion users globally, with an interface that provides avenues for messaging creativity (Techcrunch, 2017)[2]. Facebook also plays a key role in a consumer's pre-travel decision-making (Jadhav *et al.*, 2018). India and the USA were apt choices for the cross-cultural comparison, as they had the top-two highest number of Facebook users, as of October 2019 (Clement, 2019). Also, India shows a primarily collectivist culture, with the individuals

staying in a cohesive society with strong person-to-person connectedness. In contrast, the USA has a largely individualistic society (Khan *et al.*, 2016; Lu, 2018).

The previous studies use a combination of likes, comments and shares on SNS posts to represent engagement (Agrawal *et al.*, 2018). In this study, the three outcomes are taken separately as different levels of engagement, as the activation of one does not necessarily trigger another (Coelho *et al.*, 2016). So, if someone comments on the SNS message, shares it and likes it, each action is considered a different engagement event (Agrawal *et al.*, 2018). Based on Mariani *et al.* (2018), commenting on the message is coded as high/cognitive engagement, sharing the message as medium/affective engagement and liking the message as low/conative engagement.

Table 1 depicts the top-five travel brands, each from the USA and India, based on their rankings, as of July 7, 2019 (socialbakers.com[3]). These brands were selected, as they provided the authors with a large corpus of messages, with varying vividness and orientations and the resultant number of user likes, shares and comments.

The message vividness categorization is shown in Table 3. The message orientation categorization was determined using the IPA framework (Bales, 1950; Lin and Peña, 2011; Shen and Bissell, 2013). A part of an online brand community is considered by randomly selecting certain conversations from the SNS community members, thereby constituting a partial social system (Fahy, 2006). A richer analysis of such systems can help understand the consumer-brand dynamics for even larger communities. The three broad message orientations proposed are as follows:

- 1 task/instrumental;
- 2 positive socioemotional; and
- 3 negative socioemotional.

Each orientation was further divided into various sub-orientations, as shown in Table 5.

5.2 Data collection

For choosing SNS messages, the process adopted by Vaughan (2013), who argues that the shelf-life of an SNS post is three months, was followed. Hence, a total of 100 updates of each selected travel brand posted in the last three months were considered. In case a brand posted more than 100 times, the latest posts were chosen. This process resulted in a database of

1,000 Facebook posts. For each post, the corresponding likes, shares and comments were also collected. The total sample size was limited to 1,000, as categorizing the messages according to vividness and orientations, as well as the count of consumer likes, shares and comments were done manually. Similar studies (Baghirov *et al.*, 2019; Moran *et al.*, 2019) suggest that this sample size should ensure robust analysis. As very few messages had negative socioemotional orientation (Table 4), this sub-category was not considered for further analysis. It was also ensured that the messages with disproportionate consumer responses, due to situational environmental anomalies related to the brand, were not included in the database.

6. Data analysis and results

6.1 Data preparation

The message coding for task/instrumental and positive socioemotional orientation was conducted by two researchers who are experts in linguistic analysis. The validity of the coding procedure, measured through the inter-rater reliability, was checked using Cohen's kappa (Cohen, 1960). The kappa value was calculated through a coder agreement-disagreement matrix for each variable category, with each cell (intersection of subcategory combinations for both coders) containing the count of messages classified by each coder. The actual agreements were compared with the agreements that may happen by chance. This assumed that each coder had an equal probability of putting a message in a certain subcategory. Cohen's kappa was found to be 0.86 for message orientation, 0.92 for message vividness and 0.79 for message sub-orientation, indicating satisfactory inter-rater reliability (Lombard *et al.*, 2002). The message-vividness coding, as well as the count of likes, shares and comments, being objective, was done by the authors.

6.2 Descriptive statistics

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics. A simple *t*-test suggests that the average number of shares/comments is significantly different for the American and Indian brands, with higher values in the USA. However, the number of likes did not differ significantly, with the average in India slightly higher. The number of comments, shares and likes does not depict univariate normality for each travel brand. This is because the skewness and kurtosis values are beyond the acceptable ranges of ± 2 and ± 7 , respectively, implying a need for suitable data transformation (Curran *et al.*, 1996).

Table 3 provides the cross-tabulation between message vividness and the average number of comments, shares and likes for each country. The analysis reveals that travel brands from both countries did not post an image-, text- or video-only messages. They, rather, used a combination to maximize consumer-brand engagement. The American travel brands did not post a single video-only message, unlike the Indian travel brands who posted 0.5% of those. The American travel brands had a significant number of posts containing videos combined with text/links, whereas such messages comprised only 2.7% of the posts in India.

It can be inferred that all types of engagement were significantly higher when the travel brands posted a video with text and a link(s), compared to other such combinations. Thus,

Table 1 Travel brands (followers as on 7 July 2019)

Travel brand	Country	Facebook followers	Code
National Geographic Travel	USA	5,318,814	NGL
Carnival Cruise Line	USA	4,886,923	CCL
Disney Cruise Line	USA	2,316,781	DCL
Royal Caribbean International	USA	2,011,523	RCI
Princess Cruises	USA	1,810,022	PCU
Veena World	India	1,571,739	VWO
Mahindra Adventure	India	1,332,066	MAD
Via.com	India	1,271,478	VIA
EaseMyTrip.com	India	1,047,034	EMT
Club Mahindra	India	173,454	CMA

Table 2 Descriptive statistics

Outcome	Country	Travel brands	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Comments M = 82.05 SD = 470.19	USA M = 40.67 + SD = 635.77	CCL	176.64	206.10	+3.4	8.8
		DCL	394.02	1,370.02	+3.7	9.4
		NGL	54.48	89.65	-2.4	-2.8
		PCU	68.32	96.48	+3.3	8.6
		RCI	9.07	14.22	-2.9	-3.8
	India M = 23.54 SD = 178.63	CMA	87.03	390.83	+4.4	10.8
		EMT	1.26	3.99	+3.8	9.6
		MAD	18.85	45.65	+4.2	10.4
		VWO	8.36	25.93	+3.9	9.8
		VIA	2.23	4.87	-2.7	-3.4
Shares M = 167.55 SD = 612.68	USA M = 276.71 + SD = 471.86	CCL	260.16	384.55	+3.2	8.4
		DCL	541.12	1,143.05	+4.5	11
		NGL	462.29	1,280.27	+3.4	8.8
		PCU	83.62	165.43	-2.2	-2.4
		RCI	36.37	121.79	+3.1	8.2
	India M = 58.98 SD = 261.40	CMA	79.79	352.54	+4.5	11
		EMT	38.52	46.73	+3.9	9.8
		MAD	141.09	443.63	-2.9	-3.8
		VWO	31.35	96.99	+3.9	9.8
		VIA	4.16	14.97	+4.4	10.8
Likes M = 1,565.42 SD = 5,900.55	US M = 1,521.16 SD = 4,668.25	CCL	2,281.27	8,802.92	-3.7	-5.4
		DCL	2,355.36	3,238.00	-3.6	-5.2
		NGL	1,617.49	4,220.74	-4.2	-6.4
		PCU	1,050.33	938.55	-3.8	-5.6
		RCI	302.31	333.62	+1.7	5.4
	India M = 1,609.58 SD = 6,920.05	CMA	3,309.20	9,025.78	+2.4	6.8
		EMT	48.33	108.20	+2.1	6.2
		MAD	4,517.07	11,884.61	-3.4	-4.8
		VWO	151.74	187.56	+2.9	7.8
		VIA	21.57	43.76	+3.2	8.4

Notes: M: mean; SD: standard deviation; + mean value is significantly higher than the other country at $p < 0.05$

Table 3 Cross-tabulation for vividness and engagement

Message vividness	Type of engagement (M, SD)			Frequency	Country		Total
	Comments	Shares	Likes		India	USA	
Image	157.50 (222.73)	60.00 (82.02)	272.50 (359.91)	Count	1	1	2
				%	0.10	0.10	0.20
Image/text	52.92 (127.32)	77.75 (217.05)	1,761.40 (813.99)	Count	143	177	320
				%	14.30	17.70	32
Image/text/link(s)	28.56 (87.62)	74.84 (156.86)	901.65 (28.98)	Count	281	174	455
				%	28.10	17.40	45
Multiple images/text	141.60 (194.79)	155.80 (135.92)	1,232.50 (539.04)	Count	0	10	10
				%	0.00	1.00	1.00
Text	28.00 (18.08)	35.67 (41.18)	609.00 (348.05)	Count	1	2	3
				%	0.10	0.20	0.30
Text/GIF/link(s)	161.00 (62.73)	123.80 (118.16)	487.40 (275.66)	Count	1	4	5
				%	0.10	0.40	0.50
Text/video	147.74 (432.33)	273.92 (547.11)	2,229.08 (575.05)	Count	41	44	85
				%	4.10	4.40	8.50
Video	29.20 (61.45)	30.40 (51.29)	308.40 (465.26)	Count	5	0	5
				%	0.50	0.00	0.50
Video/text/link(s)	322.08 + (1,287.28)	724.71 + (1,574.19)	3,349.1 + (752.88)	Count	27	87	114
				%	2.70	8.70	11.40

Notes: M: mean; SD: standard deviation; + value is significantly higher than others all in the specific column at $p < 0.05$

the *H1b* is supported, while *H1a* is not. Messages need higher vividness to encourage the number of likes, shares and comments. It implies that both the central and peripheral routes, from the ELM perspective, need to be activated for the lower-, medium- and higher-level engagements (Agrawal *et al.*, 2018; Mariani *et al.*, 2018). However, fewer messages for all the travel brands contained videos with text and links. Rather, the brands largely posted messages with images coupled with either text only or text and links. These two types of messages had low follower engagement across all the travel brands. Table 4 presents the message orientation categorization. It is observed that most of the messages were in the task/instrumental category.

The number of comments and shares was consistently higher for the American brands for all message orientations. However, the number of likes was higher for the American brands with task/instrumental messages and for the Indian brands with positive socioemotional messages. Table 4 suggests that irrespective of the message orientation and country, the number of likes and shares are always higher than the number of comments (Mariani *et al.*, 2018). There is no significant difference in the number of comments across the two orientations. Table 5 presents the breakdown of message sub-orientations. Most messages from the Indian and American travel brands were in the information-giving subcategory, followed by the solidarity and tension-release subcategories.

These are found to have varying impacts on engagement. A higher number of comments is associated with the messages that ask for either information or opinions. The messages that give information or suggestions have a strong association with the number of shares. The number of likes is found to be associated with those messages that give suggestions or information. Based on Tables 4 and 5, the average number of comments and shares is higher for task/instrumental orientation and the number of likes does not significantly differ across the two orientations. Hence, *H2a* is partially supported while *H2b* is not. This result contrasts with the insights from the IPA framework and implies that the task/instrumental or

socioemotional-orientations has little effect on the levels of engagement (Nelmarkka *et al.*, 2015). Table 6 presents the multi-variable cross-tabulation of message vividness and orientation/sub-orientations. The engagement was highest for the messages with a video combined with text or link(s) across both orientations.

A combination of positive socioemotional-orientation with either image-with-text or video-with-text messages is found to influence the number of likes. Such messages have the potential to initiate engagement, which can be built upon by messages with videos combined with text/link(s). Thus, the *H3* is largely supported. From the results of *H1a*, *H1b*, *H2a* and *H2b*, high/cognitive engagement (comment) is interpreted as an outcome of activation of both central and peripheral routes. The socioemotional-orientation has a weak positive intervening effect on the number of comments (Mariani *et al.*, 2018).

6.3 Relational analysis

To analyze the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables, multiple regression with dummy variables was used. The numeric values of comments, shares and likes were non-normal and hence log-transformed as shown in Table 2 (Curran *et al.*, 1996). Each dependent variable was considered in a separate regression analysis. The categorical independent variables, vividness and sub-orientations, were coded as dummy variables with binary coding (absent = 0; present = 1). The results are presented in Table 7.

For the USA, for sub-orientations, the messages asking for opinions or information, giving information or opinions or indicating a task/instrumental orientation, positively affect the number of comments. Also, the message vividness, such as image combined with text or link(s), multiple images with text and text with video or link(s), positively influence the number of comments. For India, the results differ, as the message sub-orientations such as tension release (a socioemotional orientation) and higher message vividness, through multiple images or text and video, text or link(s), show a greater impact

Table 4 Cross-tabulation for orientation and engagement

Message orientation			Comments	Shares	Likes
Task/instrumental	India	M	25.76	56.45	1,391.60
	<i>N</i> = 367	(SD)	(205.35)	(222.06)	(5,847.74)
	USA	M	199.15+	358.77 [*]	1,855.15 [*]
	<i>N</i> = 269	(SD)	(851.25)	(1,018.25)	(6,198.10)
	Total	M	98.73	183.67	1,586.66
Positive socioemotional	<i>N</i> = 636	(SD)	(579.67)	(697.29)	(5,997.29)
	India	M	17.04	66.43	2,249.81 [*]
	<i>N</i> = 133	(SD)	(42.48)	(353.48)	(9,387.99)
	USA	M	71.67 [*]	179.51 [*]	1,130.88
	<i>N</i> = 227	(SD)	(126.60)	(445.85)	(1,354.71)
Negative socioemotional	Total	M	52.02	138.82	1,533.44
	<i>N</i> = 360	(SD)	(107.61)	(418.02)	(5,745.47)
	USA	M	15.50	48.50	366.50
	<i>N</i> = 4	(SD)	(0.70)	(7.77)	(24.74)
	Total	M	15.50	48.50	366.50
	<i>N</i> = 4	(SD)	(0.70)	(7.77)	(24.74)

Notes: M: mean; SD: standard deviation; * mean value is significantly higher than the other country at $p < 0.05$

Table 5 Cross-tabulation of message sub-orientations and engagement

Message orientation	India		USA		Total		Comments	Shares M (SD)	Likes
	Count	(%)	Count	(%)	Count	(%)			
<i>Task/instrumental</i>							98.73 [*] (579.67)	183.67 [*] (697.29)	1,586.66 (5,997.29)
Agreement	24	5	40	9	64	6	40.67 (65.71)	90.69 (190.15)	1,581.55 (7,591.84)
Asks-information	28	6	59	11	87	9	399.38 (199.71)	131.87 (427.79)	1,588.14 (5,748.26)
Asks-opinion	7	1	27	6	34	3	397.01 (234.33)	57.97 (113.57)	499.15 (683.49)
Gives-information	277	55	131	26	408	41	278.79 (523.86)	334.68 (843.17)	1,780.16 (6,698.28)
Gives-opinion	31	6	12	3	43	4	71.98 (193.63)	79.86 (167.30)	1,338.72 (3,521.06)
<i>Positive socioemotional</i>							52.02 (107.61)	138.82 (418.02)	1,533.44 (5,745.47)
Gives-suggestion	30	6	42	9	72	7	173.10 (1,530.76)	338.07 (433.29)	1,787.25 (4,503.96)
Shows-solidarity	66	13	88	17	154	16	57.92 (109.06)	140.47 (382.38)	1,777.22 (5,228.10)
Shows-tension-release	37	8	97	19	134	14	50.79 (121.71)	158.63 (524.91)	1,312.66 (5,341.02)

Notes: M: mean; SD: standard deviation; *mean is higher for this orientation than the other one, for the same engagement, at $p < 0.05$

Table 6 Cross-tabulation between message orientation and engagement

Message vividness		Task/instrumental			Positive socioemotional		
		Comments	Shares	Likes	Comments	Shares	Likes
Image	Mean	1,57.50	60.00	272.50			
	<i>N</i>	2					
Image/text	Mean	63.54	90.73	1,679.57	39.62	61.23	1,888.34
	<i>N</i>	180			138		
Image/text/link(s)	Mean	29.33	75.27	855.35	26.71	73.77	1,013.76
	<i>N</i>	322			133		
Multiple images/text	Mean	141.60	155.80	1,232.50			
	<i>N</i>	10			0		
Text	Mean	26.00	16.00	333.00	29.00	45.50	747.00
	<i>N</i>	1			2		
Text/GIF/link(s)	Mean	183.00	107.25	421.50	73.00	190.00	751.00
	<i>N</i>	4			1		
Text/video	Mean	190.55	279.08	2,429.15	76.84	265.38	1,887.72
	<i>N</i>	53			32		
Video	Mean	36.50	37.75	380.25	0.00	1.00	21.00
	<i>N</i>	4			1		
Video/text/link(s)	Mean	440.66	891.88 [*]	4,395.75	146.78	477.59 [*]	1,891.98
	<i>N</i>	68			46		

Note: *Value is highest for this vividness than the others, for the same orientation, at $p < 0.05$

on the number of comments. Hence, *H4b* and *H4d* are supported.

For the number of shares and likes, in the case of the USA, message sub-orientations such as agreement, giving information, showing solidarity and tension release and messages with higher vividness are the most important. For India, the messages that give information or suggestions (task/instrumental orientation) and those with higher vividness, are the most suitable. Thus, while the USA and India differ for sub-orientations, no differences are noted for vividness, as both markets are found to prefer high vividness for the number of shares and likes. Hence, the *H4a* is supported but *H4c* is not. Based on the results of *H4a-H4d*, it is posited that the impact of activation of central and peripheral routes, through vividness and orientation, on engagement is contingent on a country's culture (Gao *et al.*, 2018; Mariani *et al.*, 2019c; Mariani and Predvoditeleva, 2019).

7. General discussion

In the current work, SNS consumer-brand engagement was operationalized at three levels, namely, low/conative (likes), medium/affective (share) and high/cognitive (comments). Message design was measured through orientation/sub-orientations and vividness/content-type. The various levels of consumer-brand engagement were expected to be influenced by message-orientation/sub-orientations and vividness/content-type. However, the findings are not completely aligned with the theoretical expectations. While the task/instrumental-orientation significantly affects the number of likes/shares, the socioemotional orientation does not influence the number of comments (Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Nelimarkka *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, vivid messages (video/text/links) are most useful for all forms of engagement (comments/likes/shares). Thus, interactivity, navigation, connectedness and aesthetic features

Table 7 Regression results

Independent variable	High engagement (Comments)			Medium engagement (Shares)			Low engagement (Likes)		
	β	Sig	SD	B	Sig	SD	β	Sig	SD
USA									
Constant	-1.768	0.000		-1.485	0.000		2.963	0.000	
Agreement	0.069	0.696	0.011	0.416*	0.000	0.072	0.233*	0.010	0.056
Asking-for-information	0.349*	0.024	0.067	-0.146	0.063	-0.050	-0.023	0.772	-0.007
Asking-for-opinion	0.421*	0.043	0.057	0.194	0.072	0.057	-0.010	0.924	-0.002
Giving-information	0.519*	0.012	0.264	0.417*	0.001	0.132	-0.556	0.738	-0.169
Giving-opinion	0.719	0.017	0.064	-0.119	0.537	-0.011	-0.067	0.665	-0.009
Giving-suggestion	0.111	0.517	0.018	-0.199	0.071	-0.035	0.064	0.472	0.015
Showing-solidarity	0.203	0.139	0.046	-0.165	0.100	-0.113	0.329*	0.000	0.110
Showing-tension-release	-0.201	0.132	-0.048	0.260*	0.022	0.166	0.232*	0.001	0.081
Image-with-text	-0.217	0.401	-0.132	-0.514	0.302	-0.275	0.639*	0.000	0.239
Image-with-text/link(s)	0.635*	0.000	0.181	-0.516	0.301	-0.169	0.492*	0.000	0.206
Multiple images with text	0.295	0.048	0.060	0.509*	0.000	0.109	0.245	0.003	0.073
Text with video/link(s)	0.482	0.001	0.248	0.524*	0.029	0.102	0.554*	0.002	0.031
Adj. R ²		0.678 (686)			0.851 (0.854)			0.818 (0.822)	
INDIA									
Constant	-1.021		0.000	0.122	0.568		2.359	0.000	
Agreement	0.367*	0.048	0.236	-0.384	0.253	-0.048	-0.070	0.838	-0.007
Asking-for-information	0.161	0.190	0.000	-0.561	0.045	-0.089	-0.526	0.066	-0.068
Asking-for-opinion	0.152	0.108	0.007	0.148	0.769	0.012	-1.117	0.031	-0.076
Giving-information	0.219	0.012	0.064	-0.366	0.208	-0.055	0.497*	0.005	0.267
Giving-opinion	0.625	0.096	0.019	-0.396	0.182	-0.138	0.078	0.793	0.010
Giving-suggestion	-0.138	-0.072	0.589	-0.031	0.909	-0.005	0.405*	0.005	0.051
Showing-solidarity	0.247	0.059	0.167	-0.346	0.074	-0.081	0.105	0.599	0.020
Showing-tension-release	0.371*	0.031	0.461	-0.089	0.723	-0.016	0.169	0.510	0.024
Image-with-text	-0.248	-0.076	0.101	0.352*	0.032	0.101	0.316	0.000	0.074
Image-with-text/link(s)	0.346	0.000	0.181	0.359*	0.000	0.117	0.346	0.000	0.161
Multiple images with text	0.495*	0.028	0.040	0.309	0.000	0.119	0.545*	0.001	0.173
Text with video/link(s)	0.582*	0.001	0.148	0.424	0.029	0.105	0.454	0.022	0.091
Adj. R ²		0.539 (556)			0.488 (507)			0.644 (0.657)	

Notes: β : standardized coefficient; sig: significance; values in italics are non-significant at $p < 0.05$; *coefficient is significantly higher than that for the other country at $p < 0.05$

built into the brand SNS communications enable a high-quality engagement (Cyr *et al.*, 2018; Xu and Sundar, 2016).

The message sub-orientations and vividness do not evoke equivalent consumer-brand engagement across India and the USA. This can be attributed to the countries' cultural backgrounds (Khan *et al.*, 2016; Lu, 2018; Mariani and Predvoditeleva, 2019). For example, low- and medium-level engagement was found higher for Americans when the brands posted messages with videos, text and links. However, Indians commented more to such posts. Within message sub-orientations, for Indians to display high-level engagement, a socioemotional-orientation was required (showing tension release). For low- or medium-level engagement, Americans required messages that give agreement, information and solidarity or tension release. The tension-release sub-orientation was found to work well in both countries, being more useful for generating comments in India and likes and shares in the USA. The specific cultural aspects that give rise to these differences were not examined. However, findings support the existing notion that, due to the higher indulgence,

individualism and uncertainty avoidance of Americans, they tend to rely on videos. Indians, however, prefer a tension-release orientation due to their lower masculinity (Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Mariani and Predvoditeleva, 2019).

8. Theoretical implications

Theoretically, this work offers three contributions. The concept of consumer-brand engagement in the domain of digital platforms such as SNS, is still evolving in the extant branding literature (Dessart *et al.*, 2015; Hollebeck *et al.*, 2016; Pongpaew *et al.*, 2017; Ferreira *et al.*, 2020). One stream of works, primarily in the digital platform space, proposes it as a behavioral outcome of the general direct/indirect consumer-brand interactions (Hays *et al.*, 2013; Kumar *et al.*, 2018). The other stream considers it as a multi-dimensional psychological construct with cognitive, affective and conative outcomes, each leading to a unique behavioral response (Brodie *et al.*, 2013; Ferreira, *et al.*, 2020; Harrigan *et al.*, 2017; Hollebeck *et al.*, 2016; Lu, 2018).

This work integrates the two viewpoints by validating that the consumer responses to brand messages on SNS are direct reflections of different levels of consumer-brand engagement. Thus, this work supports the argument that engagement represents a complex system of consumer-brand interactions, each with a different behavioral outcome on a digital platform (Buhalis, 2020; Dessart *et al.*, 2015; Mariani *et al.*, 2019a; Mariani *et al.*, 2019c). A consumer who is cognitively invested with a brand will depict higher-level engagement (comments) with the brand's message. A consumer who is emotionally invested will depict medium-level engagement by sharing the brand's messages. Finally, a consumer with a conative investment depicts low-level engagement in the form of liking the brand's messages.

The conceptualization of three unique engagement-based outcomes also aligns well with the customer influence behavior (like), the customer-referral behavior (share) and the customer-knowledge behavior (comment) engagement dimensions proposed by Parihar and Dawra (2020). Such a conceptualization is a departure from most extant studies in the online context and is also consistent with recent empirical validations in the domain of digital consumer-brand engagement (Agrawal *et al.*, 2018; Dessart *et al.*, 2015; Ferreira *et al.*, 2020; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016; Mariani *et al.*, 2018).

This work contributes to the communications theory by demonstrating that message design is critical for generating engagement with the audience/consumers (Moran *et al.*, 2019). Based on the tenets of ELM, this study proposes vividness as an important message quality and finds it to have a significant impact on engagement (Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Nisbett and Ross, 1980). The findings suggest that SNS messages with vivid information, supported by audio-visual components (videos/links/text), are more engaging than plain textual ones (MacKenzie, 1986; Mariani *et al.*, 2018). The findings, thus, resolve the contradiction within extant research on the enabling vs inhibiting effects of vividness on consumer responses (Keller and Lehmann, 2008). This work also adds to recent research leveraging the ELM in the SNS context by suggesting that peripheral cues (videos/interactivity), supported by strong central ones (content), cause the most engaging behaviors (Cyr *et al.*, 2018; Xu and Sundar, 2016).

Based on the IPA framework, message orientations were classified into two categories – task/instrumental and socioemotional – which were further divided into sub-orientations. The detailed categorization adds value to the extant communications literature discussing SNS message design that drives the specific types of engagement-driven behaviors (Nelmarkka *et al.*, 2015). By considering the selected brand messages as a partial social system for analysis, this work offers new applications for the IPA framework (Fahy, 2006; Nelmarkka *et al.*, 2015; Savolainen, 2011; Shen and Bissell, 2013).

The study reports differences in the effects of vividness and orientations/sub-orientations on engagement across two countries, India and the USA. The specific differences are attributed to the cultural backgrounds of the two countries. The insights complement literature studying SNS brand messages and their global consumer outcomes (Gong, 2018; Khan *et al.*, 2016; Kumar *et al.*, 2018; Lu, 2018). For example, Khan *et al.* (2016) study the impact of message quality on

consumer engagement in SNS across three countries and suggest similar strategies for a medium or high level of post-interaction for Australia and the UK and a low level of post-interaction in the USA. This work not only focuses on two countries that are more culturally different but also covers the brand SNS message attributes in greater detail.

9. Managerial implications

The study outcomes are also relevant to practitioners. SNS marketers need to consider the two elements of SNS messages, vividness and orientation, as well as likes, shares and comments as the three different levels of consumer-brand engagement (Coelho *et al.*, 2016; Mariani *et al.*, 2018). Different combinations of message orientation and vividness lead to different types of engagement. For example, the highest level of vividness (video/text/link) works best for all levels of engagement. The task/instrumental orientation maximizes the number of likes and shares, while the socioemotional orientation does not help generate comments. A message with high vividness and a socioemotional orientation combination is the most engaging. Thus, if SNS marketers want to create a universal SNS message campaign and aim to get a higher number of comments, shares and likes, they must post messages with high vividness and socioemotional-orientation.

SNS marketers also need to understand the cultural background of their target consumers and customize their messages accordingly. To obtain high/cognitive engagement (comments), in the USA and similar countries, brands need to post combinations of videos/images with text/link(s) to enhance their posts' vividness or ask for opinions/information, as their sub-orientation. In India and similar countries, SNS messages should be in video/multiple-image format along with text/link(s). The sub-orientation should be to give information/enable tension release.

In the USA, to increase the number of shares, SNS marketers should focus on giving information, showing solidarity and enabling tension release, using a single image with text/link(s) or a video with text/link(s). In India, the messages that ask for information in any form will enhance the number of shares. To generate more likes, brands in the USA should show solidarity and enable tension release in all the message types. In India, brand managers should post messages that give information, ask for an opinion and include image(s) or video with text/link(s).

The study has revenue implications for SNS platforms, which are increasingly supporting travel brand campaigns through the advertisement or the brand community channel (Mariani *et al.*, 2018). A combination of higher vividness and socioemotional-orientation works best for creating consumer-brand engagement. Thus, SNS platforms should provide marketers with the latest audio-visual technology and insights to enable them to develop vivid and appropriately-oriented messages/advertisements. SNS managers can develop a suitable consultancy mechanism to support integrated brand campaigns to maximize engagement across platforms. Big-data analytics of the travel patterns, preferences and shared travel content of existing travelers registered on the SNS platform can be leveraged (Buhalis and Foerste, 2015). SNS platforms can provide customized insights about user conversations to guide

tourism marketers for promoting the best packages at a suitable cost.

10. Limitations and future research directions

The study has a few limitations. The environmental variables, which can influence engagement, remain an unattended concern. These variables include the message posting day and time, the message length/language and the SNS platform (Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Mariani *et al.*, 2019c). Some empirical studies suggest that the user-generated content is also affected by the submission device (Mariani *et al.*, 2019b) and the type of brand/product (Mariani and Borghi, 2018). Other factors such as the brand origin, the industry, the SNS marketing expense and the firm size/sales, which can also impact user response, were not controlled (Lim *et al.*, 2020; Mariani and Borghi, 2018; Mariani *et al.*, 2019b). Future researchers can include such independent or control variables to overcome this limitation.

Though the overall sample size was of 1,000 messages, one message-orientation, negative socioemotional, was evident in very few of those. The sub-orientations also had unequal exposure across all messages. Future researchers can use a larger pool of messages with quotas to ensure that all the message orientations/sub-orientations feature equally. They can deploy big-data mining/analytic techniques such as the Latent Dirichlet Allocation, with specific programs, such as Tweet-LDA, to mine/generate larger data sets (Mariani, 2019).

The study examined engagement through three behavioral outcomes – comments, shares and likes – without investigating the quality of each outcome. The comments represented the highest level of engagement, but they can also be negative and detrimental to a brand. The raw count of comments overlooked this polarity. The demographic and psychographic profile of a user also determines the quality of engagement. For video updates, engagement can also include the total number of views, which was not studied. Future studies should operationalize and measure engagement with more richness, focusing on engagement quality.

Besides Facebook, brands do have official accounts on other such platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter. Whether engagement can be measured similarly or the effect of message design attributes on engagement stays significant on other platforms, is a matter of future investigation. The IPA framework is argued as an established method for message categorization. There is, however, always a need to explore other such robust methods by future researchers.

Brands can purchase engagement in the form of likes, shares and comments using “click farms” or bots. This possibility cannot be ruled out in the current work’s data. Future studies should determine how to differentiate real engagement from the engagement that has been artificially created by the brand. Finally, while some differences were noted in the model across the two countries, a clear examination of the specific cultural parameters as moderators is needed in future research.

11. Conclusion

Most brands have increased their investments in digital platforms such as SNS, substantially to effectively connect with consumers globally (Buhalis and Foerste, 2015;

Buhalis, 2020; Mariani *et al.*, 2019a). However, with limited research in this domain, the current study explores the meanings of SNS consumer-brand engagement, message design attributes as antecedents and cultural interventions. The current work advances the discussion on the conceptualization and measurement of consumer-brand engagement on SNS (Ferreira *et al.*, 2020). It examines the levels of engagement with specific relationships to the vividness and orientation of a brand’s SNS communication. The work also maps culture with the relative effect of the SNS brand messages on engagement. Overall, this study connects existing works on the SNS brand marketing, engagement, online brand communication and culture through rigorous empirical validations (Hays *et al.*, 2013; Mariani *et al.*, 2016). This work guides the marketers to carefully articulate their SNS messages with appropriate vividness/orientation for maximum consumer-brand engagement and to adapt these messages to cultural nuances.

Notes

- 1 <https://www.adpushup.com/blog/banner-blindness>
- 2 <https://techcrunch.com/2017/06/27/facebook-2-billion-users/>
- 3 www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/pages/total/brands/travel

References

- Agrawal, A., Gupta, A. and Yousaf, A. (2018), “Like it but do not comment: manipulating engagement of sports fans in social media”, *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 340-356.
- Bales, R.F. (1950), *Interaction Process Analysis: A Method for the Study of Small Groups*, Addison-Wesley Reading, MA.
- Baghirov, F., Zhang, Y. and Hashim, N.H. (2019), “Facebook fan page management for global airlines”, *Tourism Review*, Vol. 74 No. 3, pp. 532-546.
- Benes, R. (2019), “US travel digital ad spending 2019”, e-Marketer, available at: <https://www.emarketer.com/content/us-travel-digital-ad-spending-2019> (accessed 14 December 2019).
- Brodie, R.J., Ilica, A., Juric, B. and Hollebeek, L.D. (2013), “Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: an exploratory analysis”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 105-114.
- Buhalis, D. (2020), “Technology in tourism-from information communication technologies to eTourism and smart tourism towards ambient intelligence tourism: a perspective article”, *Tourism Review*, Vol. 75 No. 1.
- Buhalis, D. and Foerste, M. (2015), “SoCoMo marketing for travel and tourism: empowering co-creation of value”, *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 151-161.
- Chathoth, P.K., Ungson, G.R., Harrington, R.J. and Chan, E.S. (2016), “Co-creation and higher-order customer engagement in hospitality and tourism services”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 222-245.

- Clement, J. (2019), "Countries with the most Facebook users 2019", available at: www.statista.com/statistics/268136/top-15-countries-based-on-number-of-facebook-users/ (accessed 6 December 2019).
- Coelho, R.L.F., Oliveira, D.S.D. and Almeida, M.I.S.D. (2016), "Does social media matter for post typology? Impact of post content on Facebook and Instagram metrics", *Online Information Review*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 458-471.
- Cohen, J. (1960), "A coefficient of agreement for nominal scales", *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 37-46.
- Curran, P.J., West, S.G. and Finch, J.F. (1996), "The robustness of test statistics to non-normality and specification error in confirmatory factor analysis", *Psychological Methods*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 16-31.
- Cyr, D., Head, M., Lim, E. and Stibe, A. (2018), "Using the elaboration likelihood model to examine online persuasion through website design", *Information & Management*, Vol. 55 No. 7, pp. 807-821.
- Darian, J.C., Wiman, A.R. and Tucci, L.A. (2005), "Retail patronage intentions: the relative importance of perceived prices and salesperson service attributes", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 15-23.
- Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas, A. (2015), "Consumer engagement in online brand communities: a social media perspective", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 28-42.
- Essamri, A., McKechnie, S. and Winklhofer, H. (2019), "Co-creating corporate brand identity with online brand communities: a managerial perspective", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 96, pp. 366-375.
- Fahy, P.J. (2006), "Online and face-to-face group interaction processes compared using bales' interaction process analysis (IPA)", *European Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, Vol. 9 No. 1.
- Ferreira, M., Zambaldi, F. and de Sousa Guerra, D. (2020), "Consumer engagement in social media: scale comparison analysis", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, doi: [10.1108/JPBM-10-2018-2095](https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-10-2018-2095).
- Gao, S., Tang, O., Wang, H. and Yin, P. (2018), "Identifying competitors through comparative relation mining of online reviews in the restaurant industry", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 71, pp. 19-32.
- Ge, J. and Gretzel, U. (2018), "Impact of humour on firm-initiated social media conversations", *Information Technology & Tourism*, Vol. 18 Nos 1/4, pp. 61-83.
- Geissbauer, R. Vedso, J. and Schrauf, S. (2016), "Industry 4.0: building the digital enterprise", available at: www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/industries-4.0/landing-page/industry-4.0-building-your-digital-enterprise-april-2016.pdf
- Gong, T. (2018), "Customer brand engagement behavior in online brand communities", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 286-299.
- Gonzalo, F. (2019), "The State of Facebook and Instagram ads for travel marketers", available at: <http://fredericgonzalo.com/en/2019/09/26/the-state-of-facebook-and-instagram-ads-for-travel-marketers/> (accessed 14 December 2019).
- Harrigan, P., Evers, U., Miles, M. and Daly, T. (2017), "Customer engagement with tourism social media brands", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 59, pp. 597-609.
- Hays, S., Page, S.J. and Buhalis, D. (2013), "Social media as a destination marketing tool: its use by national tourism organisations", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 211-239.
- Hollebeck, L.D., Conduit, J.L. and Brodie, R. (2016), "Strategic drivers, anticipated and unanticipated outcomes of customer engagement", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 32 Nos 5/6, pp. 393-398.
- Inversini, A. and Buhalis, D. (2009), "Information convergence in the long tail: the case of tourism destination information", *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*, Springer, Vienna, pp. 381-392.
- Jadhav, V., Raman, S., Patwa, N., Moorthy, K. and Pathrose, J. (2018), "Impact of Facebook on leisure travel behavior of Singapore residents", *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 157-178.
- Jain, V. and Schultz, D.E. (2019), "How digital platforms influence luxury purchase behavior in India?", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 41-64.
- Jiao, Y., Ertz, M., Jo, M.S. and Sarigollu, E. (2018), "Social value, content value, and brand equity in social media brand communities", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 18-41.
- Katsikeas, C., Leonidou, L. and Zeriti, A. (2019), "Revisiting international marketing strategy in a digital era", *International Marketing Review*.
- Kavanagh, D. (2019), "More friends, less friendly: how social media is changing", available at: <https://blog.globalwebindex.com/chart-of-the-week/social-media-insights-2019/> (accessed 4 December 2019).
- Keeling, K., McGoldrick, P. and Beatty, S. (2010), "Avatars as salespeople: communication style, trust, and intentions", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 63 No. 8, pp. 793-800.
- Keller, P.A. and Lehmann, D.R. (2008), "Designing effective health communications: a meta-analysis", *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 117-130.
- Khan, I., Dongping, H. and Wahab, A. (2016), "Does culture matter ineffectiveness of social media marketing strategy? An investigation of brand fan pages", *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 68 No. 6, pp. 694-715.
- Kumar, S., Balagi, M.S., Soutar, G., Lassard, M.W. and Roye, R. (2018), "Customer engagement behavior in individualistic and collectivistic markets", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 86, pp. 281-290.
- Lee, C.T. and Hsieh, S.H. (2019), "Engaging consumers in mobile instant messaging: the role of cute branded emoticons", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 28 No. 7, pp. 849-863.
- Leonidou, E., Christofi, M., Vrontis, D. and Thrassou, A. (2018), "An integrative framework of stakeholder engagement for innovation management and entrepreneurship development", *Journal of Business Research*, doi: [10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.11.054](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.11.054).
- Leung, X.Y., Sun, J. and Bai, B. (2019), "Thematic framework of social media research: state of the art", *Tourism Review*, Vol. 74 No. 3, pp. 517-531.
- Leung, D., Law, R., Hoof, H.V. and Buhalis, D. (2013), "Social media in tourism and hospitality: a literature review", *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 30 Nos 1/2, pp. 3-22.

- Liao, J., Yang, D., Wei, H. and Guo, Y. (2020), "The bright side and dark side of group heterogeneity within an online Brand community", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 69-80.
- Lim, J.S., Pham, P. and Heinrichs, J.H. (2020), "Impact of social media activity outcomes on brand equity", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, doi: [10.1108/JPBM-03-2019-2298](https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-03-2019-2298).
- Lin, J.S. and Peña, J. (2011), "Are you following me? A content analysis of TV networks' brand communication on Twitter", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 17-29.
- Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J. and Bracken, C.C. (2002), "Content analysis in mass communication: assessment and reporting of intercoder reliability", *Human Communication Research*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 587-604.
- Lu, X. (2018), "Cultural differences in consumer engagement in brand-related SNS groups: a cross-cultural study of China and the United States", *Journal of Global Marketing*, Vol. 31 No. 5, pp. 295-307.
- Luo, N., Wang, Y., Jin, C., Ni, Y. and Zhang, M. (2019), "Effects of socialization interactions on customer engagement in online travel communities", *Internet Research*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 1509-1525.
- MacKenzie, S. (1986), "The role of attention in mediating the effect of advertising on attribute importance", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 174-195.
- Mahapatra, S. and Mishra, A. (2017), "Acceptance and forwarding of electronic word of mouth", *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 35 No. 5, pp. 594-610.
- Mariani, M. (2019), "Big-data and analytics in tourism and hospitality: a perspective article", *Tourism Review*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 299-303.
- Mariani, M.M. and Borghi, M. (2018), "Effects of the booking.com rating system: bringing hotel class into the picture", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 66, pp. 47-52.
- Mariani, M. and Borghi, M. (2019), "Industry 4.0: a bibliometric review of its managerial intellectual structure and potential evolution in the service industries", *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Vol. 149, pp. 119752.
- Mariani, M. and Predvoditeleva, M. (2019), "How do online reviewers' cultural traits and perceived experience influence hotel online ratings? An empirical analysis of the muscovite hotel sector", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 31 No. 12, pp. 4543-4573.
- Mariani, M., Di Fatta, G. and Di Felice, M. (2018), "Understanding customer satisfaction with services by leveraging big-data: the role of services attributes and consumers' cultural background", *IEEE Access*, Vol. 7, pp. 8195-8208.
- Mariani, M.M., Borghi, M. and Gretzel, U. (2019b), "Online reviews: differences by submission device", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 70, pp. 295-298.
- Mariani, M.M., Felice, M.D. and Mura, M. (2016), "Facebook as a destination marketing tool: evidence from Italian regional destination management organizations", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 54, pp. 321-343.
- Mariani, M.M., Borghi, M. and Kazakov, S. (2019c), "The role of language in the online evaluation of hospitality service encounters: an empirical study", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 78, pp. 50-58.
- Mariani, M.M., EkStyven, M. and Aych, J.K. (2019a), "Using Facebook for travel decision-making: an international study of antecedents", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 1021-1044.
- Mistilis, N., Buhalis, D. and Gretzel, U. (2014), "Future eDestination marketing: a perspective of an Australian tourism stakeholder network", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 53 No. 6, pp. 778-790.
- Moran, G., Muzellec, L. and Johnson, D. (2019), "Message content features and social media engagement: evidence from the media industry", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, doi: [10.1108/JPBM-09-2018-2014](https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2018-2014).
- Nelimarkka, M., Lehtinen, V., Ukkonen, A., Kuikkaniemi, K. and Jacucci, G. (2015), "Threading and conversation in co-located chats", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 53, pp. 324-331.
- Nisbett, R.E. and Ross, L. (1980), *Human Inference: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgment*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Ophir, Y., Brennan, E., Maloney, E.K. and Cappella, J.N. (2019), "The effects of graphic warning labels' vividness on message engagement and intentions to quit smoking", *Communication Research*, Vol. 46 No. 5, pp. 619-638.
- Ozboiliik, T. and Dursun, Y. (2017), "Online brand communities as heterogeneous gatherings: a netnographic exploration of apple users", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 375-385.
- Parihar, P. and Dawra, J. (2020), "The role of customer engagement in travel services", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, doi: [10.1108/JPBM-11-2018-2097](https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-11-2018-2097).
- Pederson, J.A. (2016), "It's not what you tweet but how you tweet it: an experiment of orientation, interactivity, and valence in twitter", Doctoral dissertation.
- Pongpaew, W., Speece, M. and Tiangsoongnern, L. (2017), "Social presence and customer brand engagement on Facebook brand pages", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 262-281.
- Savolainen, R. (2011), "Judging the quality and credibility of information in internet discussion forums", *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, Vol. 62 No. 7, pp. 1243-1256.
- Scheinbaum, A.C. (2016), "Digital engagement: opportunities and risks for sponsors: consumer-Viewpoint and practical considerations for marketing via mobile and digital platforms", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 56 No. 4, pp. 341-345.
- Shen, B. and Bissell, K. (2013), "Social media, social me: a content analysis of beauty companies use of Facebook in marketing and branding", *Journal of Promotion Management*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp. 629-651.
- Simon, F. and Tossan, V. (2018), "Does brand-consumer social sharing matter? A relational framework of customer engagement to brand-hosted social media", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 85, pp. 175-184.
- Stylos, N. (2019), "Technological evolution and tourist decision-making: a perspective article", *Tourism Review*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 273-278.

- Thomaz, G.M., Biz, A.A., Bettoni, E.M., Filho, L.M. and Buhaslis, D. (2017), "Content mining framework in social media: a FIFA world cup 2014 case analysis", *Information & Management*, Vol. 54 No. 6, pp. 786-801.
- Tsai, W.H.S. and Men, L.R. (2017), "Consumer engagement with brands on social network sites: a cross-cultural comparison of China and the USA", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 2-21.
- Vaughan, P. (2013), "The shelf life of your Facebook posts is shorter than you thought", available at: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-post-shelf-life-data> (accessed 23 September, 2018).
- Voorveld, H.A.M., Noort, G.V., Muntinga, D.G. and Bronner, G. (2018), "Engagement with social media and social media advertising: the differentiating role of platform type", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 38-54.
- Williams, N.L., Ferdinand, N. and Bustard, J. (2019), "From WOM to aWOM—the evolution of unpaid influence: a perspective article", *Tourism Review*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 314-318.
- Xu, Q. and Sundar, S.S. (2016), "Interactivity and memory: information processing of interactive versus non-interactive content", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 63, pp. 620-629.

About the authors

Anish Yousaf is working as an Assistant Professor of Marketing at ICFAI Business School Hyderabad. Dr Yousaf has presented his research work in various reputed international conferences and has publications in reputed international journals including *International Journal of Information Management*, *Behaviour & Information Technology*, *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, *Studies in Higher Education*, *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorships*, *Corporate Reputation Review* and others. His research interests include customer-based brand equity assessment and brand building; social media engagement and

destination branding. Anish Yousaf is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: anishyousaf86@gmail.com

Insha Amin is currently serving as an Assistant Professor in Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, India. Dr Amin has presented her research work in various reputed international conferences organized at a global level and publications in journals of repute. Her research interests include destination branding, tourism destinations and social media, destination brand equity.

Dhouha Jaziri is an Assistant Professor, FsegSo, Université de Sousse, Tunisia. She obtained her PhD degree in marketing from ISG, Tunis. Previously, she was an assistant professor at FSEG-Nabeul for six years. Her research concerns mainly experiential marketing, knowledge management, customer knowledge management, and innovation management. She has a set of high ranked peer-reviewed publications and communications around the world (several conferences such as Tunisia (ATM, 2012, 2013), Algeria (2008), Cardiff, Great Britain (2013), AGECSO (2013, 2016) France, Lithuania (2013) and Spain (2015). She is a member of AGECSO (France). She was a member of the program committee, in the workshop of business intelligence of WorldCIST'15 – (Portugal, 2015) and was recently selected as a member of the technical Program Committee of FEBM the Second International Conference on Economic and Business Management (Shanghai, October, 2017). Moreover, she is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board (IGI global).

Abhishek Mishra is an Associate Professor in the Indian Institute of Management, Indore. He did his PhD in the area of product design and its implications on brand equity from IIM Lucknow. He has publications in leading marketing journals including *International Journal of Information Management*, *the Journal of Brand Management* and his research interests are in the area of New Product Development, Product and Brand Management and Fuzzy Sets and Systems.